

I'm Not Afraid of Monsters by Dingus_Detector

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Summary:

Robin and Steve are trapped in a tiny room hiding from the demidogs when the weight of everything Steve has been through these past few years comes crashing down on him. Thankfully Robin is there to help him through it.

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Author's Note:

TW - Steve has a panic attack

If there are any tags you feel I have missed let me know and I will add them as soon as possible

The eerie silence that choked the air in the room shattered as Robin begins to pace back and forth, eyes to the floor deep in thought, her hands tracing out an imaginary map as she moves from one side of the tiny utility closet to the other. Steve was sitting cross-legged on the floor with his back pressed up against the wall, every now and then looking up to watch Robin pace a few steps. Steve hated sitting still this long, it gave him too much time to think. Robin stops in the centre of the room and looks around for a moment, seemingly evaluating the walls and ceiling, then turns to the door. Lifting herself up on tiptoe so she can lean over the makeshift barricade, she presses her ear against the wood and stands silently for a moment.

"I can't hear anything, I think they're gone." She whispers.

Steve stares down at his feet and runs his fingers nervously through his hair, "They do that. It doesn't mean anything. They could still be out there."

Robin spins round to face him. "Well we can't just stay here, we've got to go find your children, remember? Here."

Marching to the corner of the room she grabs a mop with a battered metal handle. Forcing her weight downwards with her foot she pushes the mop head off the end and flings the pole at Steve's feet. Returning to the door she begins to carefully disassemble the stack of broken chairs that they had thrown against it to hold it shut. Steve pulls himself unsteadily to his feet and picks up the mop handle. As Robin slides the last chair into the corner, she turns to Steve with a wry smile,

"Thanks for the help."

She slips past him and sets about riffling through a shelf of cleaning supplies. Steve keeps his eyes fixed on the door. He grips the mop handle tight, knuckles white against the cold metal, anxiously wringing his hands. Planting his feet he brandishes it in front of him and waits patiently for Robin's instructions. Robin is busy emptying a tub of bleach into an empty spray bottle which screws tightly shut with a self-satisfied smile. Standing back up she turns to look at Steve. She'd never really seen him like this before, sure she'd heard stories from the kids but this was different. The way he holds himself, the way he almost imperceptibly moves his wrists in tiny practice swings. She can't help but feel impressed, a fact that she makes a decided point to never tell Steve.

"Ready?" She asks, positioning herself just behind him, spray bottle at the ready. Steve nods, though the rest of his body remains firmly in place. There is a long silence. "Anytime today, Dingus." says Robin, finally, playfully nudging Steve's shoulder before sighing and leaning forward to unlock the door herself. She turns back for a second and catches sight of Steve over her shoulder, stopping abruptly with her arm halfway extended to the door handle.

"Oh my g- Steve are you crying?!"

For the first time in minutes Steve moves, snapping his head away from Robin to hide his face. She drops the bottle to the floor. She hadn't meant to sound quite so blunt but this sudden display of emotion had taken her by surprise. She places a firm hand on each of Steve's shoulders and presses down carefully, trying to guide him to meet her gaze.

"Hey, hey. It's alright. What's the matter?"

Steve slowly turns his head back to Robin. The second their eyes meet Steve's lip starts to shake violently, and the pool of tears in his eyes burst forward, rolling in quick rivers down his cheeks. He collapses into Robin's arms, hugging her tightly, sobbing so hard that Robin can barely hold him up. She's taken aback but squeezes him back as tight as she can manage. His legs are shaking so badly he can barely stand. Carefully shifting her weight, Robin guides Steve to the floor. She tactically places her back against the door, acutely aware of how loud Steve's breathing has become, and pulls his head into her

chest. He's crying so hard he's struggling to breathe.

"Hey, shhhhhh, shhh, it's okay," she whispers softly, "you need to take a deep breath, Steve." Hesitating for a moment she lifts her hand and places it on Steve's cheek, turning his face to look up at her. He's shaking his head aggressively, trying desperately to speak but unable to break past his sharp ragged breathing. "Steve listen to me." She says, firmly, "deep breath now okay? Do it with me."

Running a hand through Steve's hair, Robin takes a long deep breath in, Steve follows her with a raspy gulp of air. With a nod of encouragement she slowly releases her breath, and Steve lets out several little bursts of air, interspersed with sniffs. A good minute passes as they breathe together, Robin gently stroking Steve's hair and occasionally murmuring little words of encouragement. Steve's breath has evened out but his eyes are still streaming tears. Robin pulls him closer to her chest and holds him tight. This kind of emotional intimacy was a little alien to her, and as she sits holding her best friend in her arms it dawns on her that she has never felt this close to anyone in her life. It was also the first time she'd ever really considered the weight all this stuff must have on Steve. She'd worried about the kids before, everything they'd seen and all the peril they'd faced so young. She'd worried about Nancy and Jonathan, running around on their own chasing monsters. She even, very occasionally, allowed herself a moment to worry about herself. But she'd never once worried about Steve. She'd never felt the need to. Even at his most panic stricken Steve had this tendency to take control in a way made everyone else feel so safe. It strikes her, quite suddenly, what a terrible burden that must be.

Robin's attention is brought back into the room as something moves against her leg. She looks down to see Steve fidgeting with a zip on the pocket of her jeans.

"I don't know what's wrong with me." He whispers.

Robin hesitates. She loved Steve more than anyone on earth, but the words catch in her throat before she is able to tell him. She stares down at him, helpless. Sliding her hand down his neck she gently rubs his back in the hope it offers at least some semblance of comfort.

"I'm so scared Robin." His voice starts to break again. "I'm so fucking scared and it's so stupid because the kids go through even worse and they're just - kids, you know?! And I know I shouldn't be-"

"Steve." Robin interjects, "It's not a competition." She sat him up and turned to face him, cupping his face in her hands, "You've been through so much, so much, and you have every right to feel what you're feeling. You can't always be expected to be the hero."

Steve smiles weakly for a second, then his face falls again and he flicks his eyes away from Robin's,

"I just... I just don't want to let people down. All my life I've been a screw up and I just... I want people to be able to rely on me for just one thing."

"You've not let anyone down, Steve. I hate to admit it but, you're the bravest guy I know. Anyone who tells you any different has to be an even bigger dumbass than you." She says, giving him another gentle nudge.

Steve sighs and rubs his eyes, "Just once you know, I want to feel like I matter to someone. Like, really matter."

"You matter to me." Robin whispers, grabbing his shoulder and sweeping his head back to her chest so she doesn't need to look him in the eye for this next part. "You're my best friend, Steve. I love you."

Her statement is met with a heavy silence. Robin's words hang a few inches in front of her mouth like cigarette smoke. Her heartbeat thuds in her ears as she stares down at Steve, desperately waiting for any form response. Almost all at once she feels the air rushing back into her lungs as she hears a muffled sound emanating from her lap.

"Are you laughing?!" She demands, fighting a smile.

"No!" Replies Steve, stifling another laugh, "I just didn't expect it, that's all! I love you too!"

"You're still laughing!"

Steve rolls onto his back, laying his head on Robin's legs, his face is

red and swollen from crying but his eyes have brightened, and that same stupid smirk was back, spread wide across his face. His lips are trembling, only this time he isn't attempting to hold back tears. Robin shoots him a stern look and he immediately collapses into fits of gleeful laughter.

"You love me, you loooove me, ooooooh!" Steve squeals in a high-pitched, mocking tone, prodding Robin in the ribs to make her laugh. Robin kicks her legs under Steve's head in retaliation. He climbs onto his knees and bounces to his feet, throwing a hand out to help Robin up in one swift movement. She grabs it and pulls herself up,

"Didn't take much to cheer you up."

Steve keeps hold of her hand for a few seconds longer and smiles at her, softly. He sweeps a hand nervously through his hair, tugging away the loose strands which are stuck to his tear-stained face,

"Thank you."

His mouth opens and closes, searching for better words to express his gratitude, but Robin stops him,

"It's okay."

"Right!" Steve announces.

He leans down and grabs Robin's spray bottle and throws it at her, then scoops up the mop handle and spins it in his hand, catching it and winking smugly at Robin,

"Ready?"

Robin takes up her position again, this time standing by Steve's side. She turns the nozzle and releases a small test spray into the corner of the room, then turns back to look at Steve,

"Ready."

Steve beams at her. Gripping the mop handle tightly in one hand he rests in on his shoulder and leans forward slowly. He reaches out his hand and takes one final deep breath, and unlocks the door.

Author's Note:

I've seen a few folk on Tumblr recently who have been posting about things they would like to see from season 4 and a LOT of people are speaking about how they would love more emotional Steve.

I would love to see some more serious development of Steve's character (don't get me wrong I love comic relief Steve, I just want to see him get the meaningful development he deserves).

Anyway I wrote this because I thought it would be sweet and it's the sort of thing I would love to see from season 4. I've never written fluff before so if you've made it this far I hope you enjoyed it !!